

WHAT MY SHOES ARE TELLING ME

I have been searching for a new pair of running shoes ever since Christmas. I have looked at Costco a couple of times and at Al's Shoe store here in Brantford but could not find anything that I liked in my size or price range. Most of you who read my mid-week message on a regular basis can guess my price range when it comes to shoes.

The last time I purchased running shoes was for tennis back in the summer. I was shocked at that time that I fit into a size 10 when normally I have always been a size 8 or 8.5 when it comes to my shoes. Sometimes I have had to buy shoes that are extra wide in these sizes due to the reality of my feet.

Last week I stopped into the mall to try the shoe store there while I was waiting for my mother to come out of an appointment. I spotted a pair of shoes that I liked the look of and that fell into my cheap price range. They had a great selection of sizes in this particular shoe and what excited me was they were all the wide sizing. I started by pulling a box off the shelf at 8.5 wide. They were too tight. I moved up to 9 wide and found the same thing. I began thinking I possibly might not need another size 10. I found a 9.5 wide and tried it on only to find it was too tight. When I put on the 10 wide, sure enough, it fit perfectly.

When I came home after my shopping experience I shared with my wife and daughter my recent experiences when it has come to shoe shopping. I told them how I expected my waist size, the number of grey hairs on my head, and the number of wrinkles I have to increase as I age, but I never expected my shoe size to do so. I am in my early 60's now. If this trend continues, I might be wearing a size 11 or 12 by the time I reach 70.

For whatever reason, it seems like I have large shoes to fill lately. We can often find ourselves thinking this whenever we take over doing something that somebody else has done effectively over the years. This is the observation I make in the report I have written for our annual meeting when it comes to our yearly garage sale. I acknowledge at the beginning of my report how I found myself having to fill big shoes after taking over organizing the garage sale after all the years my mom did it, and from those individuals who took it over from her.

It can feel very overwhelming when we find ourselves having to fill the shoes of those people who have done the task effectively before us. Whether we recognize and realize it or not, this is the situation we find ourselves in when we call **Jesus "Lord."**

When Jesus was about to ascend back into heaven, He shared with His disciples before doing so that they would now have to fill His sandals or shoes. He gave this instruction in what has been referred to as the "**Great Commission:**"

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:18-19)

With these words, Jesus was commanding His disciples then, as well as His followers now, to walk in His sandals and continue to witness for Him. Jesus did not make this requirement optional for His disciples but rather gave it as a command.

Just as we may not be comfortable walking in certain styles or sizes of shoes, many believers are not always comfortable witnessing for Jesus. We need to realize that Jesus provides us with the right footwear and sizing to do this for Him. First, He has given each of us various gifts and talents to be able to walk in His footsteps and positively witness to others. Just as it is important for us to discover what is our right size when it comes to shoes, it is important for us to know our right gifts when it comes to witnessing for Him. Second, Jesus assures His disciples that they do not have to walk uncomfortably when doing this, as He is present with us through the support of the Holy Spirit as we walk in His shoes.

I cannot explain the reason for the growth in my shoe size, but hopefully my reality will get us all examining our shoes to see if we are growing in our obedience in walking in Jesus'

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean